

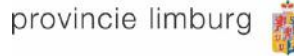
SITE VISIT REPORT: N-POWER
Monday 19th of November from 9:30 to 16:30 at
GEBROOKERBOS, Heerlen

Present:

DAMOISEAUX Kelly, Gemeente Heerlen	JOVENEAU Amelie, AREBS (Seraing)
BERKERS Monique, Gemeente Heerlen	DEHON Marie, e-alpi (Seraing)
GEELEN Fred, Gemeente Heerlen	MASQUILLIER Dirk, RISO Vlaams-Brabant
SIMONS Nicole, Gemeente Heerlen	KARA Louisa, Ville de Verviers
GEERITS André, Gemeente Heerlen	BONJEAN Morgane, Ville de Verviers
VAN DEN BERG Yvonne, Provincie Limburg	DEMELENNE Sophie, Ville de Verviers
REINDERS Jos, Neimed	GILLET Sandrine, Ville de Verviers
FRINTS Linda, Neimed	MAGNEE Chantal, Ville de Verviers
LOUALI Samira, Neimed	HABILS Dirk, Stad Genk
DECAT Suzanne, Universiteit Hasselt	STEYVERS Vicky, Stad Genk
STANGHERLIN Gregor, Ville de Liege	DIRKX Luc, Stad Genk
PAQUET Stefan, Ville de Liège	ARITS Liesbeth, Stad Genk
MONSEU Edith, Ville de Liège	HAMACKER Barbara, Stadt Aachen
LOUIS Christophe, Ville de Liège	RAWAK Myriam, Stadt Aachen
RAHIER Anne, Ville de Liège	KERENKIEWITZ Gerda, Stadt Aachen
HILGERS Alexandra, Stadt Eupen	ROSSELS Kirsten, Stadt Aachen
FLEIG Benjamin, Stadt Eupen	BLAESKE Geoffrey, Stadt Aachen
MULLER Wendy, Stadt Eupen	ZEEGERS Lieke, Hogeschool Zuyd
NIESEN Claudia, Stadt Eupen	VAN LIESHOUT Chantal, Hogeschool Zuyd
ROZEIN Ralph, Stadt Eupen	VAN DOOSSELAERE Stéphanie, University of Liege
	RUELLE Christine, University of Liege

The aim of the "N-POWER" action-research project is to improve the spatial, social and economic quality of "excluded" neighborhoods by stimulating citizens' initiatives through real co-production between local authorities and inhabitants. In this context, a training program is organized including site visits. The first one took place on November 19th 2018 in Heerlen.

"Gebrookerbos" is a development strategy for the Heerlen-Noord district, marked by the mining industry and the wastelands it left behind. Instead of considering these places as "lost", the municipality saw a potential for the quality and vitality of the neighborhood. A bottom-up approach has been organized to involve those interested in these places, to stimulate ownership and the organizational capacity of citizens, and to change the relationship between local authorities and inhabitants. In parallel, a study "Gebrookerbos Method" was launched by Neimed (research center on the demographic



question in Limburg). The objective of this research is to understand better the effectiveness of the method in order to transfer it to other regions.

Program

9:30: Reception in "kasteel Hoensbroek" Adress: *Klinkertstraat 118, 6433 PB*

Hoensbroek free parking space

9:45: Presentations:

- Project manager: history, area development / restructuring Heerlen-Noord; goals Gebrookerbos and development Gebrookerbos Fonds
- Brooker: function and role
- Account manager: function and role and expectations
- Researcher: esearch method Gebrookerbos
- Communication employee: engagement marketing and Gebrookerbos Academy

11.15: Questions

12.00: Lunch

13.00: Visit in 2 groups


	Group 1	Group 2
13.00: 13.15:	Departure to Schurenberger Park Arrival Schurenberger Park <i>Adress : parking:: Vaesraderbosweg, Hoensbroek. / Entrance: Duivelsvoetpad/Jeugrubbe 2 Hoensbroek</i>	Departure to Droomplein Arrival Droomplein <i>Adress : Livingstonestraat/Abel Tasmanstraat, Heerlen</i>
13.45: 14.00:	Departure to Droomplein Arrival Droomplein <i>Adress : Livingstonestraat/Abel Tasmanstraat, Heerlen</i>	Departure to Schurenberger Park Arrival Schurenberger Park <i>Adress : parking:: Vaesraderbosweg, Hoensbroek. / Entrance: Duivelsvoetpad/Jeugrubbe 2 Hoensbroek</i>
14.30: 14.45	Departure to Dierenweide Lotbroek Arrival Dierenweide Lotbroek <i>Adress : parkeerplein Lotbroekerweg 67, Hoensbroek</i>	Departure to Vergeten groeten Tuin Arrival Vergeten groeten Tuin <i>Adress : Harmoniestraat: path between N°17 & apartment building</i>

15.15: Departure to "kasteel Hoensbroek" 15.45: Review

16.15: Appointments N-power

16.30: End of the day



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Presentation 1: Kelly Damoiseau, project manager, Gemeente Heerlen

Gebrookerbos is a bottom-up transformation method for open spaces, which are no longer used. It's about giving space to citizens and offering them a key role in order to build the city together. This implies a change of consciousness for the citizens, and within the administration.

Gebrookerbos uses a top-down macrostructure, which creates a touristic/recreative network, in which micro initiatives can be created. When citizens are able to develop an idea their self, they feel responsible for it on the longer term. The micro-initiatives are needed to lift up the area to a high-quality socio-dynamic zone.

3 themes are identified in which the micro initiatives can take place:


- I. Nature
- II. Network
- III. Urban agriculture

There are currently 57 initiatives, 25 of which are running. A collaboration is created with the Open University and NEIMED (the Dutch knowledge centre of Demographic Transition) to conduct research into the implementation of this method.

There are two important figures in the organization of Gebrookerbos: Jos Reinders, the Brooker, is attached to NEIMED in order to have a neutral role (not part of the municipality). In addition, there are various account managers. These are civil servants who have already worked at the municipality of Heerlen, but now also assume the role of account manager who is linked to one initiative. They accompany an initiative from beginning to end, take the initiator through "the land of government" regarding permits, procedures, grants and play a role in the internal organization (change of culture)

The Gebrookerbos FONDS was established in June 2018. Citizens can apply for a support from this fund, up to 10 000 Euro. Citizens do not have to submit a financial report to prove how they used the money. Only a report containing pictures or a film are needed to show what they have realized. This forces the administration to "let go".



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Presentation 2: Joep Van Wijk, Account manager, Gemeente Heerlen

When a new idea arrives, as account manager, you may not take it over but you must try to stimulate its development. Sometimes, for the municipality, it's difficult to accept a new idea because they feel it's not necessary but if the citizens feel the need of doing it, it's important to give them the opportunity to realize it. It's not the role of the municipality to determine what's necessary or not for the citizen's.

Example: Sjef Diederenspark. A vast lawn has been transformed by the inhabitants into a memorial for the musician/singer Sjef Diederenspark. There was the will to install a piece of art honoring him. Therefore, a benefit concert was organized to raise funds. This demonstrates that the initiatives aren't a matter of "citizens ask, the municipality does, gives", but that the inhabitants have to take their own responsibility and that the municipality can guide them.

Example: Kloosterkoolhof. A school was demolished. The citizens asked the municipality what they're going to do with this empty land?". This was the opportunity to give the means to the citizens to develop a micro-initiative. The citizens draw their design project and the municipality translated them in technical plans. The inhabitants contributed to the construction of the garden by planting themselves the vegetation.

Presentation 3: Jos Reinders, Brooker, Neimed

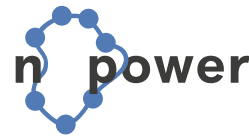
He has been working as a brooker since May 2016. The brooker act as a social advisor (broker) for the network of citizens' initiatives of Gebrookerbos and links these initiatives/idea's with the government and sometimes also with local companies or with social organizations.. He's not employed by the municipality, which gives him the space to work as a neutral and independent role. People (have to) trust him, which gives them ownership: citizens are the owner of the idea and he helps them developing it.

The "brooker" has several tasks:

- Support for citizens' initiatives (development, make it visible, collaboration, relationship between citizens and government,...) He also helps with finances, for example he makes an inventory of the financial possibilities.
- Knowledge transfer between the various parties. It ensures that initiatives do not become dependent of an expert, but that they can advise and help each other. This is made possible true the Gebrookerbos academy.
- Contribute to engagement marketing.



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Gebrookerbos is more than just a method, it also contributes to a new relationship between citizen and government. Every citizen and every civil servant experience how they can work together; how one can listen to each other; what one needs from the other.

Presentation 4: Samira Louali, Researcher, Neimed

Gebrookerbos also has a research part. Neimed sees Gebrookerbos as a method for bottom-up urban development. The research started in 2016 and will last until 2020 with Gebrookerbos as research case. The central question of the research is to what extent can the quality of life be promoted through bottom-up initiatives? Considering that there are different social systems: how do they work together? How can the method promote the socio-cultural and the socio-economic situation?

The research objectives are:

- To understand how Gebrookerbos contributes to the improvement of the socio-cultural and socio-economic situation of neighbourhoods in Heerlen-Noord.
- To explore the effects and determine the transferability of Gebrookerbos as an approach for bottom-up spatial planning in shrinking areas.

A mixed research method is used combining monitoring, qualitative studies and social cost analysis.

An important first theme observed, is the relationship between the citizens and the government. Results of interviews show that communication and accessibility of municipal forms and documents are important. On the other hand, they also deal with dilemma's such as easing the procedures (citizen desire versus municipal policy), giving physical space to the citizens...

This reveals that there are different realities and that this requires understanding:

- Rules versus experiments
- Governmental system versus informal social system
- Distance, trust and communication: a challenge for both systems
- Cooperation between social organisations and citizens initiatives

Note that this research is made in a context of crimp where buildings are being demolished in shrinkage areas, leaving empty spaces behind.

Presentation 5: Linda Feys, engagement marketing, Neimed

The objective of engagement marketing is to make all the projects as visible as possible to a large target group of citizens, municipalities, civil servants, stakeholders, media, ... With engagement marketing you try to bind people and to emphasize their knowledge. Ambassadors, people who share an idea and who feel involved in the initiative, will assure the dissemination of it (butterfly effect).

There are various ways for ensuring engagement marketing such as social media, newsletter but there is also a big part which consists on drinking coffee with each other. The most important is to keep it close to the people (right language, don't rewrite their texts,..), to respond to real needs and to use the right media for the appropriated use (a street party doesn't have to be communicated in a regional newspaper).

The Gebrookerbos academy was recently created because same questions always came back. Workshops are organized on a specific theme, in which citizens can come and listen, exchange experiences, share networks, help each other,....Everyone participates: who knows can share.

Visit 1: Schurenbergpark



Because of the crimping situation of Heerlen (young people move to the city), less schools, infrastructures, etc.. were needed. Initially, Schurenbergpark were three football fields but the football team received fewer registrations and maintenance of the fields could no longer be paid. The habitants of the surrounded neighborhood brainstormed about its new program and decide to keep the three part division by creating a life-course

field, a natural field and an activity park. The life-course forest gave the opportunity to any inhabitant to invest in a tree which would be planted on the field to remind someone beloved.

The citizens asked for funding to the province which was granted if the municipality contributed. Therefore, the citizens ideas were translated in technical plans by the municipality.

The maintenance is assured by the inhabitants but it still remains a challenge

Visit 2: Droom-en-doe plein



After demolishing a building, local residents have decided to create a space for gathering and neighborhood activities. It became a “droomplein” (dream) for residents and a doe park (do-it-yourself square) especially for the youth. Droom-en-doe plein was realized in 2014 and officially opened in 2016.

The construction of all furniture as well as maintenance is provided by the residents.

Recently, an application was made to the

municipality for a commemoration space for the mine history of the neighborhood. At first the municipality thought this was superfluous but they rapidly reconsidered because if the inhabitants ask for it, it’s because there’s a real need.

Visit 3: Dierenweide



The interior of block of houses was abandoned and local inhabitants decided to invest it to install animals. A family oppose to the project and the initiators had to stop everything. After having asked for the necessary authorizations they could reopen and today the place welcomes alpacas, chickens, deer ... Several families are invested in the project and it’s co-built with the inhabitants.

Visit 4: Vergeten groententuin

In Soek Kringloop (social economical company with light and heavy limited people) laid a neglected piece of land. The volunteers of Soek decided to do something about it. One of them was a gardener with affinity for forgotten vegetable and creative gardening. They decided to take granted of that expertise and to realize a “forgotten vegetable garden”. It is a success: a primary school and neighborhood inhabitants participate actively to the plantation and harvest. In the meantime, the garden also has 5 chicken and 2 ducks in order to eat the slakes in order to keep the biological farming.